

Ukraine on item IV

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Thank you. My delegation draws the attention to the situation faced by minorities in Crimea temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. Since its illegal occupation and annexation in 2014, numerous international monitors have published reports on the situation in Crimea, including 15 OHCHR reports. These documents reflect on serious and systematic abuses of the rights of persons belonging to minorities especially Crimean Tatars, which include forced and retroactive implementation of the Russian laws in position of Russian citizenship politically motivated incarceration and persecution, restriction on freedom of expression and belief, intimidation of journalists and systematic harassment and disruption of the new media in Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian languages. Crimean Tatars suffer from killings and forced disappearances, police brutality, arbitrary searches, arrests, torture, ill treatment, unfair trials, discriminatory legislation, effective proscription of Crimean Tatar language, seizure and violation of their property and etc. These crimes and violations are not properly investigated and those responsible are not brought to justice. Representatives of the UN system are not allowed to attend Crimea as it happened for example with Special Rapporteur of Minority Issues, Rita Izsak, in April 2014. The on-going deterioration of the situation in Crimea causes serious consequence, increasing number of IDPs leaving the peninsula. In this regard we are pleased to see you Mr Beyani among the panellists as you were able to see for yourself the situation of IDPs, including from the occupied Crimea during your visits to Ukraine. And we thank you for mentioning this situation in your presentation. Could you please elaborate on what can be done more by the UN mission to prevent further violations of minority rights in temporary illegally occupied Crimea and to stop further expulsion of minorities from the peninsula? I will also briefly respond to the statement made earlier by one of the NGOs regarding alleged so-called IDP crisis in Ukraine. The Ukrainian government recognises that the situation with IDPs, the number of which has reached 1.7 millions, is serious and is doing its best to meet their needs. However, we would like to emphasize that IDPs, including minorities, are forced to flee their homes precisely because of external military aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation. And the real purpose of the anti-terrorist operations is stabilisation of the situation in Ukraine, which the Russian Federation is trying to undermine by all possible means. Thank you.